



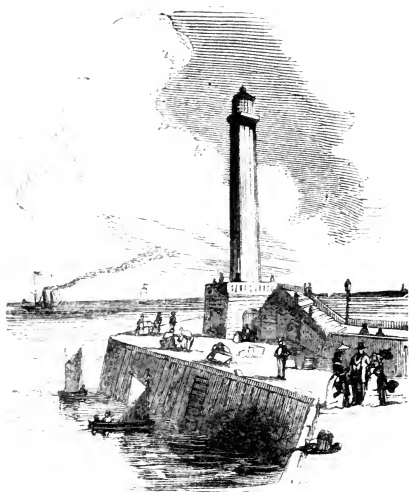
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CHILDREN'S BOOK
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Rose Harrison



THE
HERON'S PLUME.

BY MRS. SHERWOOD,

AUTHOR OF "DUDLEY CASTLE," "HENRY AND HIS BEARER,"
ETC. ETC.

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THE HERON'S PLUME.

ABOUT thirty years ago there lived in the city of London a very rich merchant of the name of Collinton. The wife of this gentleman was a very fine lady, and one whose only pleasure was in show and grandeur.

Mr. Collinton's father never had more than two children, himself and a brother some years younger.

This brother, whose name was James, was a hot-headed, unruly boy: he had been much spoiled by his mother, and when she died, he ran away to sea. It was well known in what ship

he had sailed, and it was also known that she had gone to the bottom in a storm, near the Cape of Good Hope, and everybody supposed that he had gone down with her.

Mr. Collinton sometimes, when talking of his younger days, used to say, "My poor brother James was living then;" but he never said anything more about him, and was not sorry still to keep the five thousand pounds which his father had left for this his younger son, should he ever turn up again.

Mr. and Mrs. Collinton had only two children. To these children their mamma gave as fine names as she could think of. The boy was called Adolphus, and the girl Matilda: and Master Adolphus and Miss Matilda were brought up at the greatest expense; because their parents were resolved that they should both be perfect patterns of elegance and fashion.

From the time when Mr. Collinton married till Matilda was become a tall girl, everything went on to the satisfaction of the family, and more was added every year to the stock; but just when her

papa and mamma were talking of buying a house and lands in the country, and living in style, an event took place which put the merchant very much out of his way.

A letter came from his brother James, that very brother whom Mr. Collinton had thought to be dead so many years. This letter told of escapes and troubles without number. The brother had been captured by the enemies of his country, and shut up in prison for several years. He had escaped, begged his bread, and worked as a common sailor; had made various attempts to get back to England, and had always been disappointed. At length he had met with a very lovely young person, of English parentage, in the West Indies. He had married her, and they had lived most happily on her small independent fortune, till within the few last months, when he had been deprived of her by death. He spoke with deep regret of his loss; but said he could only find comfort by returning to his old profession the sea; and he added, that as soon as he could settle his affairs where he was, he should, he thought,

engage as a partner in some trading vessel, and endeavour thus to improve his fortune.

All this was bad enough to Mr. Collinton, who felt that he should have to refund poor James's fortune. But what had gone before was not the worst; the letter went on to say, that there were two children. The father called them dear and pretty children. A boy of thirteen, and a girl of eleven, just left motherless, and without means of education—and these would be, he said, on their way to England before the letter could reach their uncle. They would be sent under the charge of the little girl's god-mother, Mrs. Storer, who intended to reside in town, and would, on their arrival, be forwarded immediately to their uncle.

This letter was put into Mr. Collinton's hands by a friend, who was just come from the West Indies,—one who had seen Mr. James Collinton himself, and had known him as a boy; there could, therefore, be no mistake.

Immediately on receiving this letter, Mr. Collinton hastened to his wife to tell her the change.

They now consulted what was to be done. They were both very angry, though neither of them said to the other how vexed they were to hear that a man was alive whom they had thought dead many years ; but Mrs. Collinton especially murmured aloud at the children being sent to them ; and indeed said so much, that her husband, after a little while, seemed to be hurt with her violence, and requested that the subject might be dropped ; and so it was between the lady and her husband, though she continued to fret without ceasing for many days, and she was continually saying to Miss Philimot, her daughter's governess, that she hoped she would take care that there was no intimacy between Matilda and her cousin, adding that she herself should use measures to prevent Adolphus from forming a friendship with the boy, —such children as those being of course very unfit to associate with elegant young people like her own.

Mrs. Collinton arranged that the children should be sent to school soon after they arrived. She

had hardly chosen the schools in which she intended them to be placed, when the little people came.

They were kept only three days at that time at their uncle's.

The names of these children were Edward and Annabella ; and, as the father had said, they were particularly handsome, although pale from the effect of the hot climate whence they had come. Edward was rough and spirited, and could only be led by kindness. It was not so easily to be seen what Annabella was ; for she did little else than weep at the idea of being parted from her brother, during the few days in which she remained at her uncle's.

And now we must pass over two years from the time the children came from the West Indies. Mr. Collinton had made up what his lady accounted a loss of five thousand pounds, and interest upon it, and had added as much again to his own money ; and now he and Mrs. Collinton began to talk in earnest of a country-house. At length they heard of one in Devonshire, which they thought would

suit them well ; and early in the spring of the year in which Matilda was fourteen, Mr. Collington came from town to see the place and make the purchase.

Heron Hall, as it was called, was an old stone house, though wanting only a little brushing up to make it the handsomest dwelling in the neighbourhood. It stood in a park, very finely wooded, and at some small distance from the house was a superb lake. Parts of the borders of this lake were wide and open, on other sides it was shaded by groves of trees, which came down to the water's edge ; but that which made one of the greatest beauties of the place, was that at the end of the lake most remote from the house, was an island. Of course the island was small ; but it could boast of many fine old trees, as well as various shrubs and evergreens, which had been planted there to look well in the winter season.

For many years beyond the memory of any man then living, this island had been a place where those birds called herons had been accustomed to come at the breeding season, to make their nests

at the top of the highest trees. When Mr. Collinton bought the place, he was told the herons used formerly to meet there every year in large numbers ; but that of late fewer had come ; and the reason given was, that since the hall had not been occupied, and there had been fewer persons on the premises, the birds had been disturbed, either by wanton persons, or by persons who wished to snare them for their beautiful crests and plumes.

Mr. Collinton had been much pleased at the idea of having a heronry on his estate. He thought it sounded grand, and asked if it were only at the breeding season that the birds were seen about the island ?

The old game-keeper, who was telling the history of the heronry to the new master, said that he had observed two of them about fishing in the lake during the whole of last winter, and one he should know perfectly again anywhere ; because he had more white about him than any one of the kind he had ever seen.

Mr. Collinton gave strict orders to the game-

keeper to guard the heronry, adding that it would be a great pleasure to him to see it as prosperous as it was in the good old times.

There was no time lost after Heron Hall was bought, in putting it into proper order. All the best furniture, the paper, and the curtains, were sent down from London ; and in a few months it was ready for the family.

Nothing, in the meanwhile, had been heard of Captain James Collinton, for so his brother now called him ; and his poor children began almost to fear that he was dead.

When they were preparing to leave London, Mr. Collinton proposed, that as Heron Hall was so large, and Matilda would be parted from her young friends in London, Annabella should be taken from school and kept with her cousin, at least as long as she could make herself agreeable to her and to Miss Philimot : and when Adolphus heard of this, he thought that he should much like to shew the grandeur of his papa's new house to Edward. Thus it was settled that they should all come down together to Heron Hall. Mrs.

Collinton, Miss Philimot, Matilda, and Annabella, travelled in the coach ; and when they came within a few miles of the Hall, they all began to look anxiously about them.

They were still about three or four miles distant when they came to a small town, in which were several handsome houses, a large town hall, and some respectable shops ; but what pleased Mrs. Collinton still more, was a very elegant residence, situated in a beautiful garden near the road-side, and scarcely a mile from the park gates. Whilst she was still eagerly looking at it, Mr. Collinton, who was on horseback, rode up to tell her, that the place before her was the residence of a widow lady of high rank, namely, the Lady Jane Barclay, that she was the life and soul of the neighbourhood ; and had said, as he had heard, that she should be the first person to visit the new family.

Mrs. Collinton was very much pleased at the thought of having a visit from such a lady ; but she was still better pleased when she saw the grand house and beautiful place which she was to inhabit.

As they rode through the park to the house,

Matilda tried to hide her delight by seeming quite indifferent to everything ; but Annabella was filled with joy at the thoughts of the liberty she should have in running about these wide grounds.

The boys, too, who were on horseback, and therefore could see the place better than those in the coach, were both much pleased. Adolphus thought most of the grandeur of the woods and of the island in the lake, which was the resort of the herons ; but Edward was most delighted with a large pleasure-boat which lay upon the quiet waters, and which had a sail which could be easily unfurled on occasion. Edward was in his heart almost a sailor, like what his papa had been.

My young reader shall not be much troubled with many accounts of what Mrs. Collinton thought and felt when she found herself mistress of such a place as Heron Hall, with its noble house, its park, its gardens, its lake, and its heronry. It may please him better to hear how the children got on.

When Matilda and Annabella had followed Mr. and Mrs. Collinton through all the grand rooms,

they asked to see the apartments which were for them and Miss Philimot, and they were shown into a suite of rooms on the first floor, which looked out over the lake to the park, having the island and tall trees of the heronry almost in a line with the windows. These rooms consisted, first, of a large apartment, which might serve for a study, a work-room, or a play-room. It was neatly furnished. There was a room on each side of this ; one being only a closet, in which was a little bed for Annabella ; the other being very large, and furnished with great taste. This last was for Matilda and Miss Philimot.

The governess expressed great satisfaction with everything, and Annabella thought her little room the most delightful place in the whole world ; but Matilda affected not to care for anything, and when she condescended to speak at all, it was always to find fault, and to say that she wished things had been differently managed.

Annabella was not only naturally gentle and quiet, but she was more than naturally good humoured, as will be seen by and by. She had,

until she was near eleven years of age, been almost constantly with one of the best and most pious of mothers. She knew very well, because she had been taught by God, that no child can change the heart of another; and she also knew that it was not her place to find fault with her elders. She therefore left Miss Matilda to murmur and mutter as she pleased, and set herself to unpack and arrange her few articles in the drawers and shelves in her delightful little closet, where a prospect of the park from the window reminded her of some view of this kind which she remembered in Barbadoes.

For some time Annabella heard no other sound in the outer room than a sort of languid muttering proceeding from Matilda, and a fawning whine which came from Miss Philimot, who was trying in vain to sooth her pupil into good humour, when suddenly there was a bang, as of a door slammed open, which made her start, and then a loud burst of voices. She knew these voices to be those of Adolphus and Edward. "Well, Miss Matilda,"

were the first words which she heard, "what sort of a place have you got here?"

This enquiry was made by Adolphus, and it was answered by Edward before Matilda could so far master her affectation as to bring out a single word.

"A very good berth, a capital berth," said the young sailor; "and it must be confessed that you have made a good exchange of this fine light room for your dusky cabin in Finsbury Square, Miss Collinton."

"Dusky cabin!" repeated Matilda, "I am sure that my apartments in town were quite as handsome as these, as lofty and as light, and perhaps better furnished. I do not think that papa, when he selected these rooms for me, acted with his usual good taste; for I should much have preferred the other side of the house, where there are a darling suite of chambers which face the grand approach."

"And from which you could have seen all the fine folks steering up to the house, Miss Matilda,"

said Edward; what a pity that you should have nothing to look at but green trees and water!"

"Really, Edward," said Matilda, "I wish when you left the ship which brought you over from your own country, that you had left your loud voice and some of your inelegant expressions behind you."

"I am sorry I do not please you, cousin," said Edward carelessly, and he began to step along the room, as if measuring its length, turning round at the end, and calling out, "twenty-four by twenty. I say, Adolphus, what did the gardener say was the size of the new boat on the lake?"

"Really, Edward," replied Adolphus, "you are fit only to do as your father did; and I should not wonder if that were the end of you after all."

"What do you mean?" asked Edward, hotly; "what did my father do, and what is the end which you are talking of?"

"Why," replied Adolphus, "that I should not wonder if you were to run off to sea and get drowned."

No one can say what answer Edward might

have made, if Annabella had not come out of her closet at the moment, and had she not run up to him with the gentleness and lightness of a fairy, and placed her gentle hand on his lips, "Come with me, brother," said she, "come, dear Edward, I have a thousand things for you to do;" and drawing him with her, she led him first into her closet, and thence by another door into the gallery, and so out into the garden.

When Adolphus, Matilda, and Miss Philimot were left, they spent a little time in heartily abusing Edward, whom they called a low, vulgar boy. They next spoke of Annabella. Miss Philimot said she was a remarkably plain child, but otherwise well enough; Matilda called her a poor, harmless thing; and Adolphus, merely to provoke his sister and Miss Philimot, reminded them that Lady Jane had not thought her exactly the ugly thing they said she was; after which, this agreeable brother and sister parted.

The family had arrived at Heron Hall about three in the afternoon; dinner had been ordered at five; after which Mr. Collinton and his son

were rowed over the lake in a small boat, (kept there for such purposes,) to the heron's island. They had learned that this was about the time of the day in which there was as good a chance as any of seeing the birds. The breeding season was past; but, as the game-keeper told his master, the same two which had remained there during the last winter were still about; one of these being remarkable for having more white about it than is usual with birds of the kind.

The little boat hove gently into a shady corner at the back of the island; and Mr. Collinton and his son crept softly through the bushes and low shrubs, to that point where the game-keeper had more than once seen the white heron standing in the water, ready to pounce on any unfortunate fish which might come within its reach.

Adolphus lost his cap in the scramble through the bushes. He was, however, fortunate in his object, creeping on his hands and knees to where a peculiar sound, as of something disturbing the water, attracted his attention. He half raised himself when near the edge of the bank, and

peeping between the holes of two trees, he caught a very clear view of the white heron, just as she was in the act of swallowing a fish. His father was coming up after him ; but he gave him a look to turn away and make no noise, and thus he actually had the pleasure of looking so long at the bird, that he could, as he thought, have distinguished it again from every other of its kind.

Mr. Collinton did not see the bird till it rose to fly away. He was, however, so much pleased with its appearance then, and altogether so anxious to protect the herons, and to keep up the ancient heronry, that he most strongly cautioned his son, on no account whatever to carry a gun in the direction of the island, nor to shoot, nor injure in any way any heron in or near his estates, nor to permit any other person who might be in his company so to do.

After the first day or two at Heron Hall, Annabella and Edward found that they were left to do pretty much as they chose. Miss Philimot had consented to permit Annabella to assist, as she called it, whenever she gave Matilda her lessons ;

but as Matiida seldom chose to take a lesson, her cousin found, that if she did not strive to improve herself, there would be an end of her education.

Mr. Collinton had engaged a learned gentleman in the neighbourhood to come and instruct his son for a few hours every morning, and Edward was for the present to take lessons with his cousin. The remainder of the day was all to himself, and he was by no means at a loss how to employ it. Whilst the fine weather lasted, he was always out of doors, and Annabella was with him whenever she could; and they must have been dull indeed, if they could not have amused themselves in such wide and delightful grounds as those of Heron Hall.

They were not required to be present at the family dinner when there were any visitors; and as there were few days without visitors, they had the liberty of absence six days out of the seven.

When these two orphans were together, it was very natural for them to speak of things which were gone and past; of their dear mamma and their native island; and of that indulgent father

whom they never expected to see again ; and one of their schemes of amusement was building a hut in a pine-grove in the park, into which few people ever came, and they called it a wigwam, and spent much time in and about it, till the weather got too cold to allow them any longer to fancy themselves still in dear Barbadoes.

In the meantime, all the people of any consequence in the neighbourhood had called on Mr. and Mrs. Collinton, and they had returned their morning visits, and accepted invitations to dinner ; and as autumn advanced, these neighbours were invited again, and several grand entertainments given to them. Matilda and Miss Philimot had gone everywhere with Mrs. Collinton, and Matilda had been thought very elegant, and Miss Philimot the most accomplished, agreeable person in the world.

The Lady Jane Barclay, however, instead of being the first, was the last person to call upon Mrs. Collinton. She had been to the sea-side during the latter few months, and did not return till the beginning of October.

The very day after her arrival, however, she set out to make her visit to Heron Hall; and, as she always chose to do things in a way quite different from other people, she set out to walk, followed by a little foot-boy, who carried her cloak. She was a tall, thin woman, with bright eyes, and a very bright colour in her cheeks; and she had on the same gay bonnet which she had worn at the bathing-place, all tarnished as it was, and not improved by a few rolls upon the sands, when taken from her Ladyship's head, as it had been once or twice, by a sudden gust of wind.

It was Lady Jane's custom, when paying her morning visits on foot, always to take the shortest cut across the country, though this cut should lead her over a ploughed field or through a fold-yard. Her shortest way from her own house to Heron Hall was through Edward and Annabella's favourite fir-grove, and the two children were standing in the door-way of their wigwam, with their heads dressed out with branches of pine, when the lady appeared, not five yards from them. She did not express any surprise at this strange sight, for she

affected never to wonder at anything; but she called to Edward and his sister to stand just as they were, and not to move an inch.

"It cannot be better," she said, as she came nearer and nearer; "what a sweet picture it would make: and you," she added, looking at Edward, "are a fine, handsome, bold fellow; but not so much to my taste either, as that innocent looking thing, there, your sister, with her bright golden locks."

"Your names, of course, are Collinton; well, good bye, my pretty dears, we shall be better acquainted by and by;" and she hurried on towards the Hall, and was admitted into an elegant morning-room where Mrs. Collinton was sitting with Miss Philimot.

Lady Jane behaved with the same ease and singularity in this elegant room as she had done in the fir-grove, and Mrs. Collinton thought her the most charming, delightful person that ever was, till she made a most terrible mistake. She had supposed that the boy and girl whom she had seen in the park, were the son and daughter of the lady with whom she was speaking; and having told

where she had seen them, she expressed her admiration, particularly of the little girl, in words which filled both the mother and the governess of Matilda with very bad feelings. Mrs. Collinton was obliged to explain who these children were, and Miss Philimot was so imprudent as to tell Matilda and Adolphus all that Lady Jane had said of their cousins. Thus from one thing to another envious and angry feelings grew and gained strength among these children. The only one amongst them to whom a better spirit was given being Annabella ; and this young girl was enabled through the Divine assistance, not only to fear the ill effects of jealous and angry passions in her own mind, but to endeavour to do all she could in counteracting them in the mind of her dear brother.

When it was become too cold for his sister to be much out of doors, Edward took up another amusement, and this was shooting small birds. He and Adolphus took up this taste about the same time ; and as Mr. Collinton was no sportsman, they went out with one or other of the game-keepers, and received instructions from them in

the management of their fowling pieces, and in all things belonging to this kind of craft. Here, again, was a clashing of merits between the two cousins. Edward proved by far more skilful as a sportsman than Adolphus. His eye was more correct, and in spite of private interest, where the game-keeper paid Adolphus one compliment on his improvement, he paid Edward twenty. Nor did either of the boys behave well on these occasions; for if one sulked, the other triumphed, and there was no little Annabella present to place her hand on her brother's lips, or to whisper in his ear—"Is this according to the gentle and forgiving spirit of our blessed Redeemer?"

Lady Jane had invited Mrs. Collinton to an elegant dinner, and Mrs. Collinton had returned the compliment. Two nieces of Lady Jane had come to see their aunt, and Matilda had thought both of them charming, and these young ladies were still at Barclay Cottage, as their aunt's house was called, when the following note was put into the hand of Mrs. Collinton. It was as follows:—

"I owe an entertainment to I know not how

many of my good neighbours : as I know not how else to pay my debts in a summary way, I have thought of a ball and supper one day, and a little musical festival another, for I must not bring all my people together at one time.

“But I shall want a friend to take some of the burthen off me. I have thought of you. You must come two days before my ball, and you must stay with me for a week. You are to bring your daughter and her harp, and your very agreeable Miss Philimot, and my sweet little favourite of the fir-grove, and your gentlemen may come and go as they please. This day fortnight is the day which I expect you.”

Of course the invitation was accepted. Miss Philimot wrote the answer on pink paper in her lady's name, and then ran up to tell the joyful tidings to Matilda, and to consult upon dresses to be prepared. It happened that when Miss Philimot came up, Annabella was writing a letter to her godmother, Mrs. Storer, and it was a matter of course that she should tell her of the pleasure which was before her. It was not a week after

this letter was gone, when a box came directed to her from London. It was brought straight up to the young lady's room; and although Annabella read her own name at full length in large characters on the lid, she still could not believe that it was for her.

It was at length forced open. At the top was a letter from Mrs. Storer, in which that lady said, "that she had sent her dear little girl two dresses, in which to appear at Lady Jane's two evening entertainments; and a bonnet to wear, should she find it necessary to be much dressed any morning."

It cannot be disputed that the articles which the box contained were all more than necessary for the occasion of this visit to Lady Jane; but Mrs. Storer herself loved dress and fashion, and what she did she meant kindly.

Whilst Annabella was reading the letter, Miss Philimot had taken everything out of the box and spread it on the sofa. One of the dresses was of very fine muslin, trimmed with lace and white satin, the other was of sprigged net, made over

pink satin. This was also beautifully trimmed ; but the darling of all, as Miss Philimot said, was the bonnet or hat, which was of purple velvet, with a magnificent heron's plume fixed on one side, a little plaited cap placed within, giving to the whole, as the same lady said, a most feminine and elegant air.

No one inquired what Annabella thought of all this magnificence ; but Miss Philimot saw in half an instant that Matilda was inexpressibly hurt and cut up at the sight of them. Her own dresses were ordered, and were expected to be ready in a few days ; but her mamma had not thought of getting her a new hat ; and how shocking dowdy she should look beside Annabella in her magnificent hat.

Of course Miss Philimot made no remark about the hat before Annabella, but, taking it up in her hand, she walked with it to Mrs. Collinton's dressing-room, and having explained what had happened, she said, "Miss Matilda should have a hat as nearly like this as may be." To this Mrs. Collinton agreed ; and it was then settled, that

the governess and her pupil should go, as soon as the carriage could be got ready, to the small town close by: that they should there consult the milliner, who was already busy with Matilda's dresses; and that, if possible, she should engage her to make a hat equal to that which had come from town. "The only difficulty I see," said Mrs. Collinton, "will be in the plume, but we must by all means have the plume."

Miss Matilda and Miss Philimot set out as soon as the coach drove to the door, and took with them, not only the hat, but the frocks, for the milliner to take the latest London fashions, and they came back in high spirits. They had chosen a very rich velvet, and a ribbon quite superior to that on the pattern hat; and the milliner had said that she had not the least doubt of being able to get a heron's plume.

At the end of four days from this time, two large baskets, something like magpies' cages, arrived from the milliner's, one containing all Annabella's things, which had gone for patterns, and the other the new things for Matilda. Never

was a better imitation than that of the hat ; but, alas ! instead of the heron's feathers, was a note of apologies. No such thing as a heron's plume was to be had in town for love or for gold.

When Matilda read the note, she tore it to pieces, and pushed away the hat, which Miss Philimot was holding before her eyes. She did not indeed shed tears, but she sat herself down in an arm-chair, and seemed determined not to regard a word that her governess said to her.

Mrs. Collinton had heard that the baskets were come from the milliner ; and being scarcely less anxious than her daughter about the plume, she entered the room just at the moment in which Miss Philimot was laying down the hat which her ungracious pupil had pushed from her.

When Mrs. Collinton understood that there was no feather to be had, she expressed herself almost as fretfully as her daughter had done, and was inquiring whether even yet it was too late to get one from London, when Annabella, who till that instant had not understood what was the cause of disturbance, came forward and begged that

Matilda would wear her feather, telling her cousin what she really felt, that she did not care in the least whether there was one on her hat or not.

There is not room to repeat all the discussions which took place before it was settled whether Annabella's offer should be taken or not. Before dinner, however, Miss Philimot was seen, as she stood at the window of the dressing-room, carefully unfastening the plume from the bonnet which had come from London, and transferring it to the other; and all would have passed off without bad consequences, had not Edward unfortunately come into the same room to look for his sister, at the very instant that the removal of the feather from the London to the country bonnet was complete. Annabella had told him the kindness of Mrs. Storer, and he had happened to meet Miss Philimot in the gallery, when she had been carrying his sister's hat to his aunt's dressing-room. He knew it again immediately, and as quickly guessed what the governess had been doing. To Miss Philimot he said, "You have been taking the feather from Annabella's cap to put into one of Miss Matilda's."

Miss Philimot turned round to look at him, but did not speak ; and he repeated his words again, with no small violence. At the same instant Adolphus came into the room, stepping softly, and listening to what his cousin was saying.

Miss Philimot explained to him what was the cause of Edward's anger.

Adolphus took up the matter, and asked "if he was mean enough, after all the favours his mother and sister had shown Annabella, to grudge so trifling a favour as that of the loan of a feather ?"

A feather indeed is a light thing, but it was no feather that really caused this discord between the cousins, though it was the occasion of the bursting out of the angry and jealous feelings which they had long entertained towards each other. From one angry word they went to another, and yet their quarrel did not come to its height either that day or for three or four days afterwards, although the boys continued to be very sullen to each other.

Edward in the meantime went out every morn-

ing with his gun, and thus the time went on till the day before that fixed for the ladies to go to Lady Jane's.

It was not long after noon on that day, that Edward knocked at the door of Matilda's room. Being told to enter, he came forward, and presented his sister with a roll of coarse brown paper, which, being unfolded, showed a very fine heron's plume.

The feathers of this plume had the appearance as if they had not been long taken from the bird. If dressed at all, it had not been done by a very skilful hand. Still they looked remarkably fine and glossy. Having made his present, Edward did not wait to hear what his sister would say ; but looking round with a bright and sparkling glance, he left the room with the air of a person who had done something vastly fine.

At the foot of the principal staircase was a room which Mr. Collinton devoted to business. As Edward came down these stairs, he saw the old gardener and the game-keeper go into this room, and when they were in, the door was shut after

them. He did not suppose that he should have anything to do with what they had to say.

He passed through the hall, went out at the front door, and it was more than an hour before he returned to the house.

As he came into the hall, a servant man met him, and asked him to walk into the study, for this was the name given to the room at the bottom of the stairs.

When he arrived there, he found his uncle standing with his back to the fire, his aunt sitting near, and his cousin Adolphus looking out of the window.

Though Edward was far from being a timid boy, there was something so solemn in the manner of his relations, he stood quite still at the entrance of the room, his eye at the same time falling upon a few white feathers which lay upon a piece of brown paper upon the table.

"Come forward, Sir," said Mr. Collinton, "and answer me a few questions." Edward stepped towards the table, and there stood still again.

"Tell me, Sir," continued Mr. Collinton,

"where you got that plume which the gardener saw this morning in your hand."

"I bought it, Sir," continued Edward.

"Of whom?" asked Mr. Collinton.

"I am not at liberty to tell," replied Edward.

"Not at liberty to tell!" exclaimed his aunt, and she shook her head.

"You have been shooting one of my herons, Sir," said Mr. Collinton, "in order that your sister might be decked with its plume; and, let me tell you, Sir, that knowing as you do how anxious I am to preserve these birds, you could not possibly have done anything which could have annoyed me more."

"Are any of the herons missing?" asked Edward, in some surprise.

"Your surprise is well affected," murmured Mrs. Collinton; and Mr. Collinton said, "whether the information is wholly or only in part new to you, Edward, I now tell you that the white heron has not now appeared for four days, although I knew it not till this morning. The gamekeeper

had had his suspicions all along, but he did not hint to me even at the loss of the bird, till this morning."

"Well, Sir," said Edward, impatiently—

"Hear me out," replied Mr. Collinton, "and then you shall speak. On the morning after the day, as far as I can find, on which you chose to take offence at the transfer of a plume from your sister's to my daughter's hat, you went out with your gun."

"I did so," said Edward; "I go out every morning."

"That same morning," continued Mr. Collinton, "the white heron was seen by the gamekeeper, and also by the gardener, flying from the island over the lake in a westerly direction. They watched the flight till the bird had disappeared, and at the same moment that they could see it no longer, they heard the report of a fowling-piece; and the heron has never since been seen."

"All this, Sir," said Edward, "proves nothing against me."

"Were you not sporting in that line of country,

due west of the heron's island, that morning, and at a very early hour, Edward?" said Mrs. Collinton.

"But I have not told you all that is known of this affair. This morning, not four hours since, those feathers now lying on the table, sprinkled with blood, as you now see them, were found lying on the ground in the place where the bird, if shot when and where the gamekeeper supposes it was, must have lighted on the earth."

"And the old man," cried Edward fearlessly, "really charges me with the shot. Does he not know that there are not two more men beside himself in the whole country who could at his own pleasure bring down a heron on the wing?"

"That which might not be easily done by the best marksman, might be accidentally performed by a very indifferent one," said Mr. Collinton; "and you, Edward, are, they tell me, not an indifferent one."

Instead of answering his uncle, or even trying to clear himself, Edward turned towards Adolphus, and said bitterly, "I should like to know who

could have been mean enough to have searched for those feathers in order to bring them as witnesses against an innocent person."

At the sound of his cousin's voice, Adolphus had turned, being as much offended at the suspicion conveyed in Edward's words, as Edward was at the charge brought against himself of shooting the heron. The eyes of the two youths met, and had they been flint and steel, they would have emitted flames. The supposed depravity and hardness of Edward really hurt his uncle so much, that he was unable to utter another word; he threw himself into a chair, and for a moment covered his face.

Mrs. Collinton, however, who had no such tender feelings, took up the case, and continued to irritate him more by many additional reproofs which she gave him, on the supposition of his having really killed the heron, which he continued to deny; and, when she had almost worked him up to fury, she dismissed him from her presence.

Edward had run into the park, there to give way alone to his bitter feelings, and there Adol-

phus followed him. So violent was the passion of each of them, that neither of them could have told exactly what was said or done. Edward began by charging Adolphus with making up the story of the heron against him, with no truth whatever. Adolphus told him that he had not made the story up. Violent and offensive words, and even blows, passed between the angry boys, and there was no one to sooth either party. Adolphus at length, being more than half ashamed of himself, returned to the hall to dress for dinner: whilst Edward, who was already deeply sensible of his own violent conduct, walked farther into the grove, and did not return to the hall till it was quite dark.

In the meantime Annabella knew nothing either of the charge brought against her brother, or of the quarrel between the boys, and in that happy ignorance she remained till the next morning: for it was so common for Edward to go to bed as soon as he came in from his shooting excursions, that she thought nothing of his not appearing in the drawing-room at tea.

In the morning, however, a note was brought to her, scrawled very roughly by her brother, and blistered in many places by tears. This letter was merely to bid her adieu ; to say that he had been violent and proud, and had behaved very ill and ungratefully to his uncle ; and that if Adolphus had been unkind to him, he had paid him to the full in his own coin ; but that he had not shot or otherwise ill-used the heron.

When Annabella inquired what this note meant, she heard that her brother was missing ; that he had taken only a change of linen with him ; and that he had not even slept that night in his room.

The disappearance of Edward threw a great depression over several persons in the family. Adolphus was greatly shocked and vexed with himself. He had not actually made up the tale against Edward, but he had done nearly as bad ; he had strengthened his father's suspicions, and worked up his mother's anger ; and he could not hide it from himself, that he had followed Edward to the park, and that Edward had not followed him.

When any one is humbled by the feeling that he has behaved ill, it is a certain sign that a Divine Spirit is working in his mind; and it is very certain that what had happened with regard to poor Edward, continued to press very heavily on the minds of Mr. Collinton and his son. As to poor Annabella, she wept till she made herself quite ill; and there were only three persons in the family who went after all to Lady Jane's entertainment.

Months passed away at Heron Hall without any events; Edward was not heard of; the white heron did not appear again: and poor Annabella lost all the bright bloom of her cheeks; and although grace was given to her still to be patient and gentle, yet it was seldom, very seldom, that she ever smiled.

It was not till the winter, and even the colder weeks of spring were over, that the whole story of the heron's plume, the loss of the white heron, and the real cause of Edward's disappearance, which accounted for the melancholy of her favourite Annabella, reached the ears of Lady Jane.

The story came through the servants, and when the butler told the story to his lady, he begged her not to speak of it, which she promised. But she did not promise not to act upon it: for that very morning she set out on foot for Heron Hall, and there insisted upon it, in her usual singular way, that Annabella should go back with her to her cottage, and stay with her till the roses bloomed again in her cheeks. Poor Annabella was pleased with change, and felt that she could be happier with Lady Jane than with Matilda and Miss Philimot.

Soon after Lady Jane had taken Annabella away, Mr. Collinton and his family removed for a few weeks from Heron Hall to Margate, where they took handsome lodgings, and had the opportunity of showing much of their grandeur before some of their old city friends.

Miss Philimot had a brother, a smart young man, who was studying the law in London, and as it was holiday time, he came down to Margate, and was very much with the family whilst they remained there, and even after they removed to

Ramsgate, which they did when tired of the first place.

The visit of Mr. Collinton and his family to these places, happened to be the very year in which steam-boats were first used in the sea in a regular way ; and they were then so new, that many persons used to walk down to the pier at the hour when they might be expected.

This was a very favourite lounge of Matilda and Miss Philimot ; but neither Mr. Collinton nor Adolphus liked it. Miss Philimot, therefore, often engaged her brother to go with them ; and it was at one of these times that they met with the adventure represented in the picture.

The expected steamer was approaching the pier, though still at some distance, and there were several sailors, porters, lightermen, and persons of that kind, busy on the pier with bales and packages, which seemed either to have been lately brought from aboard some boat, or ready to be stowed in some other.

The only person about the pier not employed in this way, was a young gentleman, neatly dressed

something in the style of a sailor, though not entirely so ; and when first seen, his back was turned to Mr. Philimot and the ladies, and he was looking most intently and anxiously towards the steamer.

Some little argument having arisen between Miss Philimot and her brother respecting the name of the steamer, and other matters belonging to her, such as when she would leave Ramsgate again, Mr. Philimot called to this young gentleman, "Sir, I beg your pardon, but perhaps you can tell me what I wish to know?" The youth immediately turned and answered very civilly, that he was ready to reply to any questions in his power.

"What do you call that vessel, there, Sir?" said Mr. Philimot. At the moment in which the youth raised his arm to point to the steamer, Miss Philimot had her head turned round to look at some object nearly behind them, and Matilda's eyes were fixed on the steamer ; but at the voice of the youth she started, looked at his face, and instantly knew her cousin. Edward knew her at the same moment,—a deep glow rose in his

cheeks,—he turned suddenly round, sprung upon the pier, and from thence to a flight of steps which led down on the beach, and disappeared so instantly, that it was impossible for any one to say which way he went.

Miss Philimot, who had not seen the face of the youth, endeavoured to persuade Matilda that she was mistaken in the person ; but Matilda was certain that she had seen Edward, and his very running away proved that it was he ; for why should a stranger have thus fled at the sight of her ? Mr. Philimot thought that Matilda was right, and undertook to try to find out whither the boy had fled ; but neither did he, nor Adolphus, nor Mr. Collinton succeed in tracing the boy, although they made every inquiry. Whilst they remained at Ramsgate, no Edward was to be heard of, and they returned to Heron Hall as much in the dark respecting him as ever they had been.

When the family got back into Devonshire, Lady Jane brought Annabella home. The young girl looked much better in health. She had been kindly treated, and Lady Jane would not have

parted with her then, had she not received a sudden call to join an old relation, who was dangerously ill at a bathing place not very distant.

Annabella now found herself again in that little room where once she had been very happy, and where many things reminded her of her dear, dear brother. The year had gone nearly round since she had first come to Heron Hall ; and she could sit again with the window open, and look upon the lawns and groves of the park, and hear the cawing of the rooks ; all which sights and sounds reminded her of her native island, and the days of her happy childhood.

Lady Jane had given her many delightful books, and other useful presents ; but books could not make up for the loss of her brother. She wanted a companion, and although Matilda was less unkind to her than she once had been, yet she never talked to her, nor answered her when she happened to make a remark. There was, however, a great change in the manner of her uncle to her, and a still greater change in that of Adolphus.

It had pleased God to give this boy, lately so

proud and disagreeable, such a strong sense of the evil he had committed, not only in despising his orphan cousins, but in working up Edward's temper so as to make him run away from home, that he became quite a changed person.

No one, not even a child, can be made to believe that he is wicked, excepting through the power of God, the Spirit entering his heart, and giving him a new nature: and there is no other way of accounting for the different behaviour of Adolphus to everybody about him, than by supposing that this new nature had been given to him. Some months before he had been impatient to his father and mother, haughty to the servants, and hard-hearted to poor people. He had never taken any notice of Annabella, and had been cross to Matilda, and had always mocked and laughed at Miss Philimot; but now he was become polite to every body, and tried hard to get his sister to love him. There was nothing, however, which made him so unhappy, as seeing Annabella walking alone about the gardens. "A year ago," he used to say to himself, "she had a dear brother

to play with ;” and then he remembered the hut which that brother had made for her in the pine grove. I will put that hut in order, he thought, and take Annabella to it, and ask her if she will let me be the same to her as Edward was. We are getting too old to play like little children, but if she will come there and carry her work there, I will bring a book and read to her, or I will do anything to make up the loss of Edward.

As soon as Adolphus had thought of this plan, he took a workman with him to the pine-grove, and soon got the hut repaired. He had benches made in it, and a rude table put in the midst of it ; and then he came one morning and invited Annabella to walk with him. When he brought her near to the pine-grove, the tears came into her eyes ; but when she saw the wigwam in such fine order, she began to weep so much, that Adolphus was almost sorry he had brought her there.

The bitterness of her grief, however, soon became less, when he told her why he had brought her there, and how much he wished to be like a brother to her, and how he hated himself for his

unkindness to Edward. From that day Annabella became like a very dear young sister to him; and they spent many hours together in reading, working, or drawing, in that quiet place; and in this way July ended and August came, and at the same time came a letter from Lady Jane, dated from a genteel small bathing place, not thirty miles from Heron Hall.

"Here I am," she said, in her usual odd way, "with my old relation, who is getting better, though she is uncommonly dull and tiresome. There are no pleasant people here, and I have nothing whatever to amuse me but a fine old-fashioned public garden, where there is a short walk shaded by trees, and summer-house, and trellis-work, and a fountain, and an aviary for all manner of strange and odd birds, to amuse strange and odd people, and a square tank with gold fish in it, and all those sorts of things. So you must all come, papa and mamma, and all; I want company, and you will do better than most people."

"We must certainly go," said Mrs. Collinton,

as soon as she had read the letter. "Lady Jane is such a charming woman, and there is so much ease and real friendship in her letter."

In a few days all was ready, and the party set out for this bathing place, Mrs. Collinton having sent a letter the day before, to request Lady Jane to take a house or lodging as near as possible to her own residence.

Lady Jane received them all, but especially Annabella, with great kindness; and the young people were pleased to find that their apartments commanded a very fine view of the sea.

They had a bright day for their journey from Heron Hall; but as they were sitting at tea in the evening, Mr. Collinton remarked an appearance in the sea and sky which he thought threatened a stormy night.

"Oh, I hope not!" cried Annabella, "I should be very unhappy indeed, if there was a storm."

"Really," said Matilda, "as no sea, I suppose, could ever reach us here, I do not know anything I should enjoy more than to see a fine storm from these windows, and all the ships tossed about."

"You forget yourself, Matilda," said Mr. Collinton gravely, and he began hastily to talk of other things.

"See, see," cried Adolphus, a few minutes afterwards, "what is that speck on the water, far, far away—can it be a ship?" Mr. Collinton had brought a glass with him; he soon put it in order, and after he had looked a moment through it, he said that the speck was a ship, and he thought a large one.

Adolphus next looked, and kept crying out, "It gets larger every minute, and it is coming right down upon the beach below; I think the captain foresees a storm, and wants to get under the shelter of the cliff. Don't you call that piece of high-land, which runs out to our left, a cliff, papa?"

"I hope, oh! I do hope," cried Annabella, "that the ship will get in safe before the storm comes."

The whole family sat watching the vessel till the sun set, and darkness was closing in fast; after a while they could not distinguish what progress she

made ; and however fast she came, the threatenings of a storm kept time with her. The sun had set amongst angry, dark-red clouds, and there was a low, whistling sound in the wind, which foreboded no good.

Before the family went to their rooms, the whole face of the sea before them was quite black, and the wind was so loud, that had the vessel fired guns, they could not have been heard by the anxious children. In this uncomfortable state poor Annabella went to bed ; but it was long, long before she slept, and when she did sleep, she dreamed of all sorts of shipwrecks and sorrows.

The first sound Annabella heard in the morning was a rap at her door, and the voice of Adolphus, saying, " The storm is over, the sun shining bright, and the ship safe under the shore ; so get up, cousin."

Annabella did get up in great haste. Adolphus showed her the ship lying quietly within the shade of the high-land, and pointed out to her that she was a large vessel, and probably had come a long

voyage ; but she lay as far perhaps as two miles from the town, near the beach. Just below was a small steam-packet, which Adolphus said had come in the evening before, and would soon go off again.

Lady Jane called soon after the family had breakfasted, to take them to see her famous garden. They were all soon ready, and set out in three companies ; that is, Lady Jane walked with Mr. Collinton, Mrs. Collinton took Miss Philimot's arm, and Adolphus went with his sister and cousin. When arrived in the garden, the three parties separated, and took different alleys. As Mrs. Collinton went up one walk with the governess, she met a lady whom she fancied she had seen before ; but being busy in conversation, she did not give her a second thought. This lady was Mrs. Storer. She had arrived the morning before in the steam-packet. She knew Mrs. Collinton again in an instant, but she had her reasons for passing on without seeming to notice her. She went out of the garden as soon as she had passed.

There was nothing in the garden which the young people were so anxious to see as the aviary. Lady Jane had told them in what direction to look for it, and they went straight towards it.

This aviary was a handsome stone building, divided into large compartments for the different sorts of birds. As they walked towards it, they saw a youth standing looking at the birds with his back to them, and with this youth a man, who looked like a gardener; before they could come up the youth had gone away, but the man stood still. This person was the gardener, and it was his business to show off the birds, and so well had some of these been trained, that the beautiful turtle-doves, in one cage, did not refuse to pick some sugar plums from Matilda's hands.

When the young people had amused themselves awhile with these and a parrot, which chattered, and scolded, and shrieked in a manner most surprising, the gardener invited Adolphus to walk round the building, telling him he had other curious birds in the back of it, though none, per-

haps, that would please the ladies so well as the parrots. Adolphus accepted the invitation, and saw in a yard behind the house various large birds, some in vast cages, and others fastened by the leg in the open air ; but to none of these could the boy pay the least attention, for he had hardly entered into the yard before his eye was attracted by a heron ; and one, too, exactly like that which Edward had seen.

“ Where did you get that bird ? ” cried Adolphus in his amazement. “ I bought it,” replied the man, shortly. “ I know it,” said Adolphus, “ and the very place from whence it came ; and if you would sell it, you shall have a high price.”

“ Wait a bit,” returned the man ; “ if it is to be sold, it will not be to you ; it is bid for already, and the refusal promised. There was a young gentleman here, not half an hour since, who claimed its acquaintance also, and offered me all he had in the world if I would sell it.”

“ A young gentleman,” cried Adolphus, “ where is he ? where can I find him ? ” and he ran round the house to his sister and cousin, crying, “ He

is found, I have found him ; and now I can beg his pardon, and we can make it up, and we shall be happy again." Found him ! found whom ?" asked Matilda. " Edward, dear Edward," replied Adolphus, " but I do not know where he is." " Absurd !" said Matilda, pursing up her lip ; " you have found him, but you do not know where he is : how ridiculous !" Before her brother could answer, Miss Philimot's voice was heard calling as from a little distance, " Miss Matilda ! Miss Annabella ! Master Adolphus ! you must run to your papa, he wants you all ; take the straight walk to the harbour."

" They have found him ; I am sure they have found him," cried Adolphus ; and away he flew down under the trees, followed by Annabella, whilst Matilda took Miss Philimot's arm, and affecting to be quite hurried and nervous, she asked what all this bustle could mean.

" I hardly know myself," said Miss Philimot ; " but so far I understand, Mrs. Storer came to this place yesterday in the steam-packet, and with her came Master Edward ; how long he may have

been with her I know not, for I heard something of his running off to sea after he had killed the heron ; however, not half an hour ago, the rude boy was running, as for his life, down the great walk, when he almost tumbled against Lady Jane and your father ; and I and your mamma saw Mr. Collinton from a little distance take the youth in his arms and embrace him as if he had been his own son ; but this, my dear Miss Matilda, is not the most wonderful part of the story I have to tell you. Who do you think was on board that vessel which we saw last night ? ”

“ Surely not my uncle ! ” cried Matilda. “ The very same,” replied Miss Philimot ; “ and at the very instant that your too kind papa was taking Edward to his heart in the way I have described, Captain Collinton himself appeared in the garden, and Mrs. Storer with him. I suppose that he had come on shore to look about him, and had met with Mrs. Storer, and she had brought him to the garden to seek his son ; and then, my dear Miss Matilda, there was such another unceremonious greeting as had happened just before.” “ And

Lady Jane present," cried Matilda, "to see it; oh! how vulgar she must think us, so used as she is to genteel life."

"Indeed," said Miss Philimot, "I am not quite convinced that Lady Jane is quite so high bred and elegant as we have thought; for no one person present seemed more rejoiced than she was at these meetings; and, indeed it was Lady Jane who hurried me to look for you."

Not even the coldness of Mrs. Collinton, the pride of Matilda, or the affectation of Miss Philimot, could destroy the happiness of these unlooked for re-unions. Captain Collinton was returned to go from home no more; his voyage had been fortunate, and he had money enough to live quietly with his children.

It was necessary for him to leave the bathing place the next morning, and go round with his ship to London; but the restored friends had a most delightful evening together, and Lady Jane was so much pleased with Mrs. Storer, that she wished her to pay a long visit at her cottage.

A month after that they all met again at Heron

Hall, near to which, and close to one of the park gates, a small house had been found, which was soon made, with a little of Lady Jane's taste, to suit the Captain; and when they were all puzzling for a name to the cottage, Adolphus begged it might be called the Wigwam, and Lady Jane said nothing could be better. The white heron had been purchased at a high price from the man who kept the aviary, and on the day when every one met again at Heron Hall, the door of the cage in which the captive had been brought back was opened, and as soon as the creature had stepped out and stretched her wings, she soared aloft till she looked like a mere speck in the air, and soon again began to descend, alighting right upon the loftiest tree of her native island.

Edward never told that it was the young game-keeper who had given him the heron's plume, nor was it ever known who caught and sold the white heron.

THE
HOG AND OTHER ANIMALS.

A Fable.

A DEBATE once arose among the animals in a farm-yard, which of them was most valued by their common master. After the horse, the ox, the cow, the sheep, and the dog, had stated their several pretensions, the hog took up the discourse.

“It is plain,” said he, “that the greatest value must be set upon that animal which is kept most for his own sake, without expecting from him any return of use or service. Now, which of you can boast so much in that respect as I can?”

“As for you, Horse, though you are very well fed and lodged, and have servants to attend upon

you and make you sleek and clean ; yet all this is for the sake of your labour. Do I not see you taken out early every morning, put in chains, or fastened to the shafts of a heavy cart, and not brought back till noon ; when, after a short respite, you are taken to work again till late in the evening ! I may say just the same to the Ox, except that he works for poorer fare.

“ For you, Mrs. Cow, who are so dainty over your chopped straw and grains, you are thought worth keeping only for your milk, which is drained from you twice a day to the last drop, while your poor young ones are taken from you, and sent I know not whither.

“ You, poor innocent Sheep, who are turned out to shift for yourselves upon the bare hills, or penned up on the fallows with now and then a withered turnip or some musty hay, you pay dearly enough for your keep by resigning your warm coat every year, for want of which you are liable to be starved to death on some of the cold nights before summer.

“ As for the Dog, who prides himself so much

on being admitted to our master's table, and made his companion, that he will scarce condescend to reckon himself one of us, he is obliged to do all the offices of a domestic servant by day, and to keep watch during the night, while we are quietly asleep.

"In short, you are all of you creatures maintained for use, poor subservient things, made to be enslaved or pillaged. I, on the contrary, have a warm sty and plenty of provisions all at free cost. I have nothing to do but grow fat and follow my amusement; and my master is best pleased when he sees me lying at ease in the sun, or filling my belly."

Thus argued the Hog, and put the rest to silence by so much logic and rhetoric. This was not long before the winter set in. It proved a very scarce season for fodder of all kinds; so that the farmer began to consider how he was to maintain all his live stock till the spring. "It will be impossible for me," thought he, "to keep them all; I must therefore part with those I can best spare. As for my horses and working oxen, I shall have

business enough to employ them; they must be kept, cost what it will. My cows will not give me much milk in the winter, but they will calve in the spring, and be ready for the new grass: I must not lose the profits of my dairy. The sheep, poor things, will take care of themselves, as long as there is a bite upon the hills: and if the deep snow comes, we must do with them as well as we can, by the help of a few turnips and some hay, for I must have their wool at shearing time to make out my rent with. But my hogs will eat me out of house and home, without doing me any good. They must go to pot, that's certain; and the sooner I get rid of the fat ones the better."

So saying, he singled out the orator, as one of the prime among them, and sent him to the butcher the very next day.





THE

CAPTIVE CHILDREN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LITTLE DORA PLAYFAIR,"

"THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA,"

&c. &c.

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THE CAPTIVE CHILDREN.

A GOOD many years ago several families emigrated from Germany, their native land, to settle in North America.

One man with his wife, and their children, settled in a wild part of the country, where they hoped, by cultivating the land they cleared, to be able to provide for a numerous family. Such expectations, however, were doomed to be disappointed.

The emigrant's life was one of industry and hardship ; the man laboured with his elder son in clearing and tilling the land ; his wife carried the corn to a mill, which was four miles distant, got it ground into flour, and made it into bread : even the children were all busy at work ; and no one was idle where there was so much to be done, and where, indeed, it was true, that if they did not work, neither should they eat.

Industry, which is a duty at all times, was a necessity in the case of this German settler and

his family. The Apostle Paul exhorts us to be "not slothful in business," but at the same time to be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;" for we should not let the cares of this world cause us to lose sight of the world to come; and if we obey our Lord's command, to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, then we may hope that he will prosper the labour of our hands, and that the temporal things which we seek, will, through his goodness, and by his blessing, "be added unto us."

This German settler and his wife had, in their own country, been sincere and faithful Christians, attending to all the duties of religion, and desirous to train up their children in the fear and love of God. It was a great grief to them, that in the rude district in which they settled there was neither a church nor a school. They might have learned to live like heathens; for the observance of the Sabbath day, and attendance on public worship, are the greatest means of keeping up even the form of religion among any people: but the wise man has said, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it;" and the truth of this saying was proved in the case of the German I speak of; who, though he had no church to attend, no clergyman from whom to receive instruction, and no school to send his children to, did not forget the instruction he had received in his own dear native land; and having been trained up in a good way himself, now tried, with all his might, to do his duty towards the children who were dependent

on him, and their mother, for all the instruction they could obtain. He taught them diligently in all his spare moments ; his wife instructed them in work, and in singing, of which, like most Germans, she was very fond. Thus their two little girls, though brought up in the wilds of America, were as well trained children as are generally seen. The sons were hardy, active, and industrious ; but were also made to be gentle, kind, obedient ; and, above all, to remember their Creator in the days of their youth.

On Sundays, as there was no church, the father assembled the family, read the Bible, and had prayers ; all the children joined the mother in singing some of the hymns that used to be sung in their church in Germany.

When he opened the Bible, the father used to say to the little ones, " Now, my children, be still, and listen to what I am going to read ; for God speaks to us in this book."

This gave them a deep reverence for the Scriptures, and they always called the Bible " the book God speaks in."

Such a family must have been a happy one, though living in the wilds of America, and working very hard for their daily bread. They must have been happy, for they must have dwelt in peace and love. I say *must*, because if they dwelt as religion teaches us, and as God commands, peace and love must be seen among them ; they could not be otherwise than kind one to another, tender-hearted, bearing one another's burdens ; not selfish, quarrelsome, un-

civil, or ill-tempered. Such dispositions would only show religious profession without religious practice; for St. James says, "If any man among you seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth himself, this man's religion is vain." And Jesus Christ has said, "In vain ye call me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say."

I do not think the profession of religion will make us happy, but I am sure the practice of it will.

But this German family was not to be happy for ever,—not in this world, at least; for God, who sends his rain on the just and the unjust, and causes his sun to arise on the evil and on the good, suffers afflictions and trials and calamities to visit his people, reserving for them, in his own presence, "fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore."

A cruel war broke out in that part of North America, which is called Canada, and which now belongs to England: the war was between our country and the French, but the American Indians joined the latter, and cruelly afflicted the poor settlers in the neighbourhood, of whatever nation they were. These savages came up from their woods, plundering and burning all the houses they met with, and inhumanly murdering the inhabitants. One day they came to the hut of the Germans when the wife was at the mill getting the corn ground, but the poor man and his sons, and two little girls were at home. Poor man! he could not save himself or them. All he could do was to call upon God,

and commit his soul and theirs to his divine mercy, for these enemies knew not what mercy was.

The cruel Indians killed every one that was in the house, except the youngest child, a little girl of nine years old, called Regina. They carried her away with them, and when the poor mother returned, there was her happy home left unto her desolate. Her husband and children were lost to her for ever ; the house where they had laboured, and lived, and loved, was only a heap of blackened ashes !

It seems wonderful that her heart did not break at once ; that she did not lie down and die there, on the ashes of her home. I do not know where she went, or what she did ; I only know she did not die there, as we shall find before the end of the story. The Indians, as I have said, carried away the youngest child : it was their practice to carry off all the children they could seize to their woods, and keep them there to be trained up like themselves, and to labour for them.

Poor Regina was sadly terrified ; and fear and sorrow would have prevented her from walking with these swift-footed savages, even if her little feet had been able to move along with them. A young Indian took her on his back and carried her. The child wept sore, till she became "heavy with sorrow," and then she fell asleep, and her head lay on the savage man's shoulder.

Indians have sometimes very warm affections and strong feelings ; but they are taught from

infancy to love cruelty, to despise fear, and to endure pain. They do not worship and serve a God of love; they are not taught to imitate a meek and holy Saviour; and their hearts are rendered proud and implacable and cruel, and in their ignorance they "glory in their shame." Yet these savages have sometimes shown dispositions, and performed actions, which might make Christians blush for shame.

Well, the heart of this young savage was touched with compassion or affection for little Regina: and as the little fair-haired German child lay sleeping on his shoulder with the tears on her swelled and reddened face, he felt a wish to save her and to be kind to her. Doubtless it was God, without whom not a sparrow falleth, put that kind thought in his heart for this helpless one.

The Indians entered what is called in America "The Bush," that wild woody dwelling, to which even still they often carry off the captives who are so unhappy as to fall into their hands. But here the young Indian who had carried the little German girl, obtained the consent of his comrades to leave Regina in the care of his mother, an old infirm woman, who lived in a hut on the borders of the forest.

Accordingly he carried her there. Regina beheld an old Indian woman, who lay on a mat in a corner of the hut: her countenance was most unpleasing, and the child trembled as she looked at her, and clung to the young Indian.

But in a little time she got over her first terror; the young man was very kind to her, and made her understand that she must stay

with the old woman, and do all that she desired.

Regina would have been content to do so, had he remained with them ; but alas ! in a few days he departed again on the same cruel expeditions, and then Regina felt that she had not a friend in the world.

Not a friend in the world ! Oh, what misery is in that expression ! The poor little girl was yet to learn that there is a friend who sticketh closer than a brother. Father, mother, brothers, sister, all were gone, but one remained : even one who hath said, "Leave thy fatherless children, and let thy widows trust in me." Before the young Indian warrior departed, he gave his old mother a charge concerning the pale-faced child ; the term "pale-face" being by these dark-skinned savages applied to all white people. Little Regina had instinctively shrunk with a feeling of dread from the old Indian, but she knew not, until left alone with her, what a dreadful lot would be hers.

This old woman was one of those miserable creatures who have no pleasure in life but in tormenting others, and rendering all who are obliged to approach them as miserable as they are themselves. Such persons are unhappily to be found in every age and in every nation.

She was afflicted with a painful disease in the limbs and bones, which often prevented her from rising from her mat. Her only remaining relative, her son, was very seldom with her ; she had no one to do anything for her, often was in want of necessaries which she could not procure.

for herself. In such a state the temper, uncontrolled by the power of religion, generally becomes irritable, and it is frequently seen that when that blessed power has not hallowed the afflictions of the afflicted, those who so suffer actually take a pleasure in making others suffer, or in seeing their sufferings.

So was it with this old woman ; she seemed to rejoice in having got little Regina, not merely because, as her son said, she should serve and minister to her wants, but because she might vent her ill-humour upon her, and try to render her as unhappy as she was herself.

The young Indian was kind to the child ; he loved to talk to her and try to make her understand his language ; he called her his "pale face," and carried her in his arms out into the wood, or brought home to her the many-coloured birds, and dressed her fair hair with some of their gay feathers. Regina's grief was soothed by the kindness of this young savage, and she wept less bitterly for her father and mother, and brothers and sister, and for their pleasant hut, and the pleasant life they had led there. She tried to content herself in the Indian wigwam.

The Indian's dark face, his painted body, and head adorned with feathers, had terrified her at first, and she hid her eyes, and shrieked with fear when she saw him approach her ; but kindness overcomes fear and aversion, and when the young savage left the wigwam and went away from her, Regina wept much and wished he would stay. It was after his departure that the sufferings of the poor child might be said to begin.

The old woman, I have already said, was sickly and ill-tempered ; she resolved to make little Regina her slave ; and having no one else to ill-treat, she vented all the unkindness of her disposition on the white child who was placed in her power.

Every day she sent out Regina, trembling with fear, into the great wood, where the cry of strange, bright birds, or the chattering of monkeys, was all she could hear, and where she feared to be devoured by some wild beast, or to lose her way among the great thick trees.

Her business there was to collect roots and various things for the old Indian's food ; and at first the little girl did not know how to look for them, and only sat down and cried, until the evening coming on, terror drove her back to the wigwam, and then the cruel old woman fell upon her, and beat her, because she had not found what she wanted.

This was a very miserable life for Regina ; but it is said that by sorrow of countenance the heart is made better, and so it was with this little girl ; for in her sorrow she called to mind the good lessons she had learned from her dear father ; she remembered that though he was gone to heaven, and could no longer instruct her to do right, or reprove her when she did wrong, God, her heavenly Father, still beheld her, was still present with her ; saw her in the wild, lonely forest, and in the Indian wigwam ; knew her sorrows, and could enable her to bear them ; knew the sins and evils of her heart, and could give her grace to subdue them.

And so the child knelt down beside a great tree, and prayed to her Father in heaven to deliver her from evil.

And her fears were lessened ; Regina took courage, and went, and searched diligently for the roots the old woman wanted, and found some, and brought them to the hut ; so for that day she escaped being beaten by this savage woman.

From that time the little captive began to like the lonely, silent wood ; the shrill cries of the great birds, and the chattering of the monkeys, were far less disagreeable than the voice of the cross, discontented, old Indian, who had lost all pleasure in this life, and had not the better hopes of the life to come ; and there, in silence and solitude, Regina could think over the happy days that were past ; and if she wept that they were gone, she tried from their remembrance to derive some thought, some hope, that would comfort and support her, enabling her to do her duty even in that cruel state of life to which it had pleased God to call her.

She liked to sit and think over her dear father's prayers, and tried to repeat them daily, so as to keep them in memory, although she dwelt among heathen who knew not God. But above all things this poor captive child loved to sing in the silent woods the hymns her beloved mother used to sing with her and her dear little sister, as they sat at work.

One of these German hymns was very suitable to the circumstances of the solitary child. I only know one verse of it, which has been translated thus :—

"Alone, yet not alone, am I,
Though in this solitude so dread ;
I feel my Saviour always nigh,
He comes the weary hours to cheer.
I am with God, and God with me,—
Even here alone I cannot be."

Thus did this captive child, by patience, and the grace of God, endeavour to make the best of her dreary lot.

Providence helps those who help themselves; and while little Regina was trying to make the best, as I have said, of her solitary and dreary lot, an unexpected circumstance occurred to render it much less solitary and dreary.

The young Indian warrior returned from his cruel expedition with his tribe, bringing to his mother's wigwam another captive child, a little creature of only two years old, whose entire family had been murdered by the Indians; but the young savage got this little girl, and carried it home to his "pale face," as he called Regina, and gave it to her for a plaything.

The old woman was not the least glad to have the charge of an infant ; but Regina was so rejoiced ! She would take the little thing in her arms, and carry her out into the woods, and feed her with some food she had saved up from her own meals ; and when the child fell asleep, she would lay her down at the foot of her great tree, on as soft a bed as she could make, and would sit and watch her there ; and when she opened her little eyes, and looked up to her young nurse, Regina's heart would be so glad, and she thought God was very good to send her this little orphan to love and cherish.

And Mimy, so the little one was called, learned to love her kind nurse, and would follow her about like a little dog wherever she went, and climb up at her back when she sat down, and put her arms round her neck and kiss her cheeks.

It was a great pleasure to Regina to have a companion ; but it was a great blessing also ; for as she was living among heathens, she might have quite forgotten all the good and holy lessons her parents had taught her, if she had not got this captive infant to instruct ; young as Regina was, she remembered how she had been instructed in her own early childhood, and she thought it her duty to teach Mimy what her own dear parents had taught her.

So, sitting at the foot of her great tree, she would tell the captive infant about the great God, who made heaven and earth, and all that therein is ; who lived and cared for them, poor, helpless, neglected captive children as they were ; and she would teach her to repeat her prayers to that Great Being ; and kneeling there, the little ones daily offered up, in a heathen land, a prayer to the living and true God.

And Regina might quite have forgotten the Sacred Book, out of which her good father used to read, and in which he told' his children God speaks to men, if little Mimy had not come to her, and the desire to teach her the wise sayings and holy texts she had once learned from it, had not recalled these to her memory ; for Regina remembered how her own parents had trained her up, and thought it a duty and necessity to do the same by Mimy.

She also taught her to sing, as her beloved mother had done; and it was sweet, in that great, silent wood, to hear the voices of these captive children blend together in their favourite hymn:—

“Alone, yet not alone, am I,
Though in this solitude so drear.”

The old woman, it is true, was still cross, cruel, and often abused and ill-treated them both; but all Regina's concern was to save poor little Mimy; and many a time she intercepted a blow meant for her, and received it herself instead. Then, when Mimy cried or complained, Regina would speak to her of the patience and meekness of the Saviour of sinners, and repeat to her some text like this;—“For if, when ye are buffeted for your faults, ye take it patiently, what thank have ye?”

Or she would repeat to the little girl the history of Jesus Christ, and tell her that Christians should learn from his example to suffer unkind and even cruel treatment with patience, meekness, and forbearance.

Those who teach others generally instruct themselves; and thus Mimy was a blessing to Regina, while Regina was a blessing to Mimy. And surely on both these captive children the blessing of God descended, and they were preserved harmless and undefiled, even while dwelling in the habitation of cruelty, and cut off from all the benefits of Christian instruction.

Thus, time passed away, and love had joined their hearts, as it were, into one.

Regina was ten years older than Mimy, and was her teacher, her friend, and protector. Re-

gina was growing up into a fine young woman ; her free, wild life had rendered her strong, hardy and active ; her skin had become brown from exposure to the hot sun and air, but her light hair and blue eyes still showed that she was not of the Indian tribe.

As she was growing up, the old woman's health and strength were failing more and more, so that she could not beat her as she had done when she was a little child ; she lay generally growling on her mat, in pain and ill-temper. Regina might now have been revenged for all she had suffered, and might have neglected or ill-treated the cruel old squaw ; but she did not do so. She would often say, "Mimy, my blessed father used to read out of the book God speaks in, something like these words ; "Love them that hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that persecute you; so shall ye be the children of your Father which is in heaven.'"

It was thus that Regina exerted her memory to recall the words of the Bible, which she had never seen or heard of since she had gained her ninth year : but whatever is well-learned in childhood, is learned for ever.

And thus did Regina repay evil with good ; and served the cruel old woman, and attended to her wants, and tried to console her sufferings. Mimy imitated her example ; and it was pleasant to see the doctrines of Christianity thus practised in an Indian wigwam, and in an heathen land.

A great change, however, was to take place in that wigwam ; the providence of God often tries those whom it still protects and watches over.

These captive children had suffered long, but they were not to suffer for ever. A fierce war had been carried on by the Indians, but the English army at last defeated them; and a brave Colonel who had been sent against them, forced these savage tribes to sue for peace.

This English officer was a good and kind man: he did not love war; he wished to make peace; but he was resolved to put an end to the cruelties which the Indians had practised.

When they came and implored peace, he said he would be at peace with them, but he knew that when they had burned the houses of so many European settlers, and killed their inhabitants, they had carried off numbers of children, and kept them captives in the woods; therefore he required, as the condition of peace, that every captive should be delivered up to him.

The Indians agreed to this; and all the captives were brought forth, collected together, and presented to the English Colonel.

There were four hundred of these; most of whom were children, or young people who had been carried away in their childhood. Among the rest were Regina and Mimy.

What a strange and joyful day was that to them, when they were led out of the old Squaw's wigwam! Poor little Mimy scarcely understood what it was all about, and clung to Regina's hand, fearing she was going to lose her. She had no recollection of any other friend, or any other home. The old Indian was very sorry to see her captives go from her. She did not know their value while she had them, and, like every one else

who ill-treats those who deserve better, she was to suffer the punishment of her sin when it was too late to act differently.

When the English Colonel saw so many children and young persons, he recollected having been told that many parents had lost their children, and he thought it probable that some of these captives might have parents still living. So he issued an order that all persons whose children or relatives had been carried off by the Indians, should assemble at a certain open place, where all the rescued captives were arranged, and try if they could recognise their lost ones among them. Many a sorrowing relation, parent, or friend, came there, and many recognised the children they had feared were lost to them for ever. Among these there was great joy, embraces, and tears, and words of thankfulness.

Among the rescued captives were many whom no one claimed, for their parents or relatives had been killed ; and Regina and Mimy stood with these, hand in hand, feeling for the joy of others ; but sadness was in Regina's heart, for she remembered that she once had had dear parents and a happy home. Young Mimy did not recollect this, and therefore she did not feel so much at having no one to own her.

But the little girl was very sorry to see one poor woman, who was quite disconsolate because she could not find her children among the captives. She was very sad looking, and her hair had grown grey with sorrow. She stopped as she passed Mimy, who was now about nine years old, and gazed on her for a few moments,

and then clasped her hands, and hurried on again.

Regina was now a tall, fine looking young woman of nineteen years old, and no one could ever have known her now who had not seen her since she was Mimy's age. The tears flowed down her cheeks, but Mimy squeezed her hand, and said, "I have no one but you, you have no one but me." "Thank God for me, Mimy," said Regina, in answer; "for I thank God for you."

All the persons who had found their children, were now moving joyfully away with them; but the poor woman Mimy pitied still walked about among them, with inquiring looks, and seemed almost distracted. The kind English Colonel perceived that she sought for some dear one whom she could not find, and he went and conversed with her. She told him she had lost a child, but had no means of recognising her.

In obedience, as it seemed, to his advice, the unhappy woman went and sat down before the group of rescued captives, and began to sing in a loud voice this hymn:—

"Alone, yet not alone, am I,
Though in this solitude so drear;
I feel my Saviour always nigh,
He comes the weary hours to cheer.
I am with God, and God with me,
Even here alone I cannot be."

Wonderful to relate, as soon as this was sung, a loud cry was heard from the captive children; Regina burst from among them, and springing on the poor woman's neck, cried, "Mother! mother!"

So changed was she, her own mother had never guessed it was her youngest, her dearest child—her living and only one!

The good officer, when he found she could not at all recognise her child, asked her if she knew any familiar words, or sounds that might have made an impression on the child's memory, even if she had forgotten her native language. The mother instantly recollected her favourite hymn, and sang the verse. But she did not know how often that hymn had been practised in the great lonely woods—she did not know that even there, without father, mother, brother, sister, or friend, her captive child had made the solitary place to be glad while she sang,—

“Alone, yet not alone, am I.”

She had fainted away with joy, and when they revived her, she was in her daughter's arms ; and Mimy was kneeling beside her, saying the prayers Regina had taught her.

The poor woman had been reduced to great poverty by the destruction of her husband's little property, and his cruel death by the Indians ; but she would not leave America, and return to her friends and native land, because she yet hoped God would restore her child ; and had she been sure that she was in the Bush with these savages, and could have gone there, she would have said, like the patriarch Jacob, “Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die.”

The Colonel collected a small sum of money, and the widow and her two children were shortly able to leave the land of their heavy affliction, and

return to Germany. I say, her *two* children, for she adopted Mimy as her own : and looking on these her dear ones, she would make Regina repeat the story of her life in the Indian wigwam, and American forest, again and again; and then would listen to Mimy's account of all Regina had done for her; how she had trained, and guided, and taught her; and calling to mind her husband's hut in America, with the holy lessons and well-regulated conduct that had been heard and seen in it, she would look at Regina, and say with deep thankfulness, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. I have been young, and now am old, yet saw I never the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread."

When this good woman died, Mimy lived on in Regina's house. Regina was married, and had children of her own, whom she endeavoured, as she had done by Mimy, to train up in virtuous and Christian principles. It gave her great pleasure to be able, for the first time, to show Mimy "the book in which God speaks;" and if any of Regina's or of Mimy's descendants are yet living, I dare say the Bible is still known among them by this term. And I am also sure, that wherever these once captive children lived or went, whatever changes they had afterwards to experience, throughout their whole lives they could say and feel, as they had once sung in the deep, lonely forest,—

"I am with God, and God with me."

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